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ABSTRACT

This report is a summary update of a more extensive report on the participation of women in the Australian public VET (vocational and technical education) sector in 2000. Data were obtained from publicly-funded training providers, including TAFE (Technical and Further Education) institutions and some schools and universities, registered community education providers, and some private providers (excluding their fee-for-service clients). Some of the highlights of the report include the following: (1) from 1991 to 2000, the number of women in public VET increased at a higher rate (by 94 percent) than the number of men (by 64 percent); (2) in 2000, females participated in VET on an equitable basis with males, making up about half of all 1.7 million VET students; (3) almost 90 percent of the women students had successful school outcomes, but in terms of employment outcomes, female graduates were more likely than males to be unemployed or employed part-time; and (4) the concept of traditionally "female" and "male" occupations still exits and some industries predominantly employ either males or females. (KC)

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NCVER

ED 461 726

Statistics 2000

Women in VET **2000**

At a **Glance**

This publication provides summary information on female students who studied in Australia's public VET sector in 2000. It includes data on student numbers and major characteristics, training activity and employment outcomes.

Highlights for 2000:

- In 2000, females made up 49.2% of the 1.7 million students in the public VET system, up from 45.1% in 1997.
- From 1997 to 2000, the number of female students increased by 93 000, compared to 63 100 for males. This represents a growth rate of 7.8% for females and 5.3% for males over the same period.
- Over [illegible] of female students were enrolled in VET.
- Of all Australian women aged 15–64 years, 28.9% undertook some study in VET.
- Of all female VET students, [illegible] were enrolled in courses that led to qualifications at AQF Certificate III or IV.
- Female students accounted for 48.6% of 123 000 students who undertook apprenticeships or traineeships in 2000.

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Introduction

This publication is a summary update of a more extensive report *Women in vocational education and training 1999* which provided a detailed analysis of the data on participation of women in the public VET sector in 1996 - 1999[1]. *Women in VET 2000: at a glance* presents highlights of the training activity undertaken by women enrolled in VET in 2000. In particular, this report indicates that from 1991 to 2000 the number of women in public VET had increased at a higher rate (by 93.6%) than the number of men (by 64.1%). This increase corresponds to an annual growth rate of 7.6% for women and 5.7% for men.

This report also shows that in 2000, females participated in VET on an equitable basis with males, having accounted for almost half of all VET students, course and subject enrolments. In 2000, female training activity was characterised by a high success rate, as almost 90% of all assessed subject enrolments by females resulted in a successful outcome. However, as the results of the TAFE graduates survey show, in terms of employment outcomes, gender equity has not yet been fully achieved. On completion of VET training, female graduates were more likely than males to be unemployed or employed part-time. The report also indicates that the concept of traditionally 'female' and 'male' occupations still exists and that some industries predominantly employ either males or females.

Scope and technical notes

The information presented in this publication includes the 2000 data on VET delivered by publicly-funded training providers, including the activity provided by (1) TAFE institutes and other government providers (i.e., some schools and universities), (2) registered community education providers, and (3) some private providers (excluding their fee-for-service activity). This publication does not contain information on 'non-vocational' training activity (i.e., programs with a focus on recreation, leisure and personal enrichment).

Course enrolment is the registration of a student at a training provider location for the purpose of undertaking a course. A *course* is a structured program of study and/or skills acquisition, including, where appropriate, practical experience. A course may lead to a recognised qualification. The number of course enrolments may be greater than the actual number of VET students because each student may undertake more than one course at any given time.

Subject (or module) enrolment is the registration by a student at a training provider location for the purpose of undertaking a subject (module). *A subject (module)* is a unit of training which stands on its own (i.e., is not associated with any course of study) and for which a student may be formally assessed.

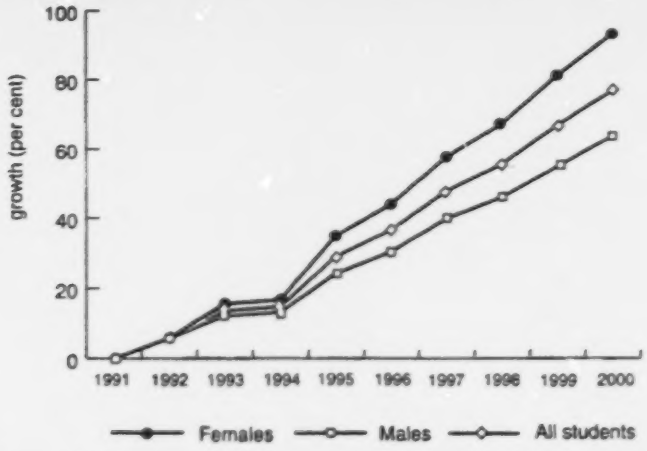
In this report, the figures that reflect the number of VET students presented by sex and age have been calculated by pro-rating the data for unknown sex and age.

Growth in student numbers

In 2000, females represented almost half (49.2%) of the 1.75 million students in the public VET sector. From 1991 to 2000, the number of female students increased by 93.6%, indicating an annual growth rate of 7.6%. In comparison, the number of male students increased by 64.1% over the same period of time, showing a lower annual growth rate of 5.7% (figure1).

[1] This report was released in 2000 and can be downloaded for free from the NCVER website at http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/commercial/op237.pdf

Figure 1: Relative percentage growth of VET student numbers by sex, 1991-2000

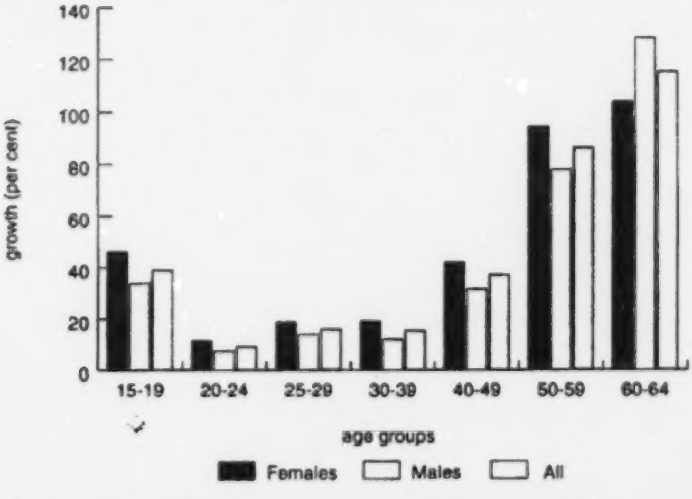


From 1996 to 2000, the number of women in public VET increased by 34.4%, compared to 25.7% for men. This increase corresponds to an annual growth rate of 7.7% for women and 5.9% for men. The annual growth rate for all VET students over this period was 6.7%.

Between 1996 and 2000, growth in the number of female students occurred across all age groups.

- The highest growth was reported for females between 50 to 64 years of age. Their number almost doubled between 1996 and 2000, having grown by 96.0%, compared to 85.6% for men (figure 2). Predominantly, women between 50 and 64 years old enrol in courses in such fields of study as *business, administration, economics, services, hospitality and transportation* and *VET multi-field education,* which in 2000 accounted for almost half of all female students in these age cohorts. Around 10% of these women undertook individual subjects not associated with any course and 36% did not seek any qualification. This indicates that VET attracts a growing number of mature-age women who are possibly interested in acquiring basic education and administration skills, without necessarily undertaking a full course that leads to a specific qualification.
- The number of young female students (15 to 19 year olds) increased by almost 50% (46.1%), compared to 33.9% for young men. In 2000, over two thirds of young female VET students enrolled in courses in such fields of study as *business, administration, economics, services, hospitality, transportation* and *VET multi-field education.* More than 70% of these women enrolled in non-award courses. These figures show that VET is becoming an increasingly popular option for young women, who predominantly undertake a full course of study that leads to a recognised qualification.

Figure 2: Percentage growth of VET student numbers by age group, 1996-2000*



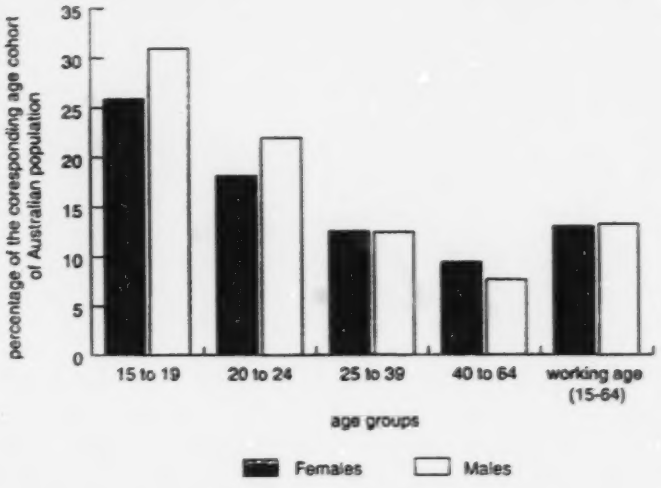
*Note: The graph does not show the data for ages below 15 and over 64.

Participation rates[2]

In 2000, over 13% of working age women (15-64 years old) undertook some kind of VET training, about the same proportion as of all working age men. The highest participation rates for females were reported for younger age groups (between 15 and 24 years of age). However, for young males, rates of participation in VET were even higher. For 25 to 39 year olds, participation rates for females were about the same as for males, whereas for 40 to 64 year olds, participation rates were higher for females. As figure 3 shows:

- Just over a quarter (25.9%) of all Australian 15-19 year old women and 18.2% of all 20 to 24 year old women participated in VET, compared to 31.0% and 22.0%, respectively, for men.
- Of all 25 to 39 year-old women, 12.6% undertook VET studies, about the same as for 25 to 39 year old men.
- Of all 40 to 64 year old Australian women, 9.5% participated in VET, compared to 7.7% for men in the same age group.

Figure 3: Female and male participation in public VET for different age groups, 2000*



*Note: The graph does not show the data for ages below 15 and over 64.

Students' age

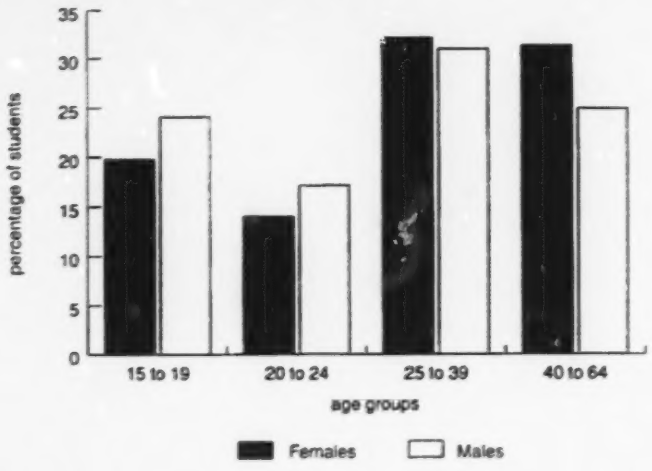
In terms of students' age, the female VET student population had the following characteristics:

- Young students (15-24 year olds) represented 33.9% of all female VET students, compared to 41.3% of all male VET students[3] (figure 4).
- 25 to 39 year olds represented almost one third of students, for both females and males (32.2% and 31.3%, respectively).
- 40 to 64 year olds accounted for 31.5% of all female VET students and 25.1% of all male VET students.
- In absolute numbers, among students of 25 years of age and older there were more females than males.

[2] *Participation rate* is the proportion VET students constitute of the Australian population.

[3] A considerable proportion of these young males is likely to be apprentices and trainees in the 'skilled trades' occupational category, traditionally a male-dominated area.

Figure 4: Percentage of VET students by age groups, 2000

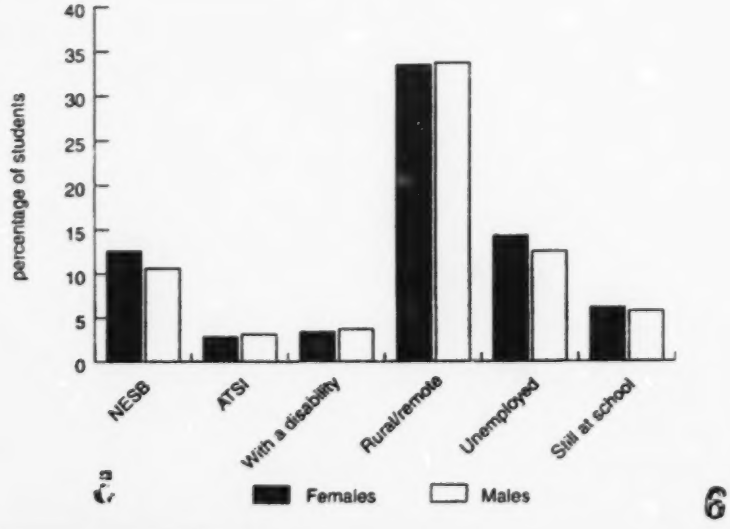


Students' characteristics

Female VET student population has various demographic, educational, cultural, ethnic and other characteristics that highlight its diversity. These characteristics differ very little from those of male students. Of all women studying in VET in 2000:

- 12.6% were from a non-English-speaking background (NESB)[4], compared to 10.6% for male students (figure 5).
- 2.8% identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), about the same as for male students (3.1%)[5].
- 3.4% reported some kind of a disability, about the same as for male students (3.7%).
- over a third (33.5%) lived in rural or remote areas, essentially the same as for males (33.7%), while a further 64.1% lived in a capital city or other metropolitan area, again about the same as for males (63.0%).
- 14.3% were unemployed, a higher proportion than for men (12.5%).
- 6.1% undertook VET training while still attending secondary school, about the same as for young men (5.7%).

Figure 5: Student diversity: selected characteristics of VET students, 2000



[4] In this publication, NESB people are identified as those who indicated that they were born in a country where English is not the main language.
[5] These figures should be interpreted with caution, as a relatively high percentage (almost 21%) of all VET students did not provide information on ATSI descent.

- Over a quarter of all female students (25.3%) had completed some kind of post-secondary education prior to starting their VET training. The corresponding proportion for males (23.7%) was slightly lower (table 1).
- A further 16.9% of female students completed year 12 as their highest education level prior to starting VET, 7.7% year 11, 13.3% year 10, and only 6.2% year 9 or lower. The corresponding figures for male VET students were very similar.

Table 1: Percentage of VET students by sex and highest prior education level, 2000

	Females	Males	All*
Degree or postgraduate diploma	5.4	3.7	4.6
Undergrad diploma	1.2	0.8	1.0
Associate diploma	2.0	1.8	1.9
Advanced technical certificate	1.3	2.0	1.6
Trade certificate	2.1	7.7	4.9
Other certificate	11.2	6.4	8.7
Unspecified prior education	2.1	1.3	1.7
Year 12	16.9	17.1	17.0
Year 11	7.7	8.5	8.1
Year 10	13.3	13.7	13.5
Year 9 or lower	6.2	6.7	6.4
Not Known	30.6	30.3	30.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**857.9**	**884.9**	**1,749.4**

*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

Courses

Fields of study

Among a wide variety of courses available to VET students, females' most popular choices were associated with the following fields of study (table 2):

- *Business, administration, economics*, which attracted 26.9% of female students and included such courses as *certificate II or III in business (office administration), accounting* and *certificate II in information technology (computer applications)*.
- *Services, hospitality, transportation*, which accounted for 16.6% of women and comprised courses like *Olympic and paralympic games (volunteer training), certificate II in hospitality (operations)* and *customer relations 2000.*
- *VET multi-field education*, which attracted 12.6% of female students and offered courses like *outreach access, director approved ACE (vocational) studies* and *certificates I and II in general education for adults (foundation).*

For comparison, the most popular choices among male VET students were the courses within the *engineering and surveying* field of study, which attracted 20.0% of male students and included *manufacturing and engineering, certificate III in engineering, certificate III in food processing, electrical-mechanic fitter/mechanic* and *certificate III in electrical (electrician).* Other popular courses belonged to such fields of study as *services, hospitality, transportation* (16.6%) and *business, administration, economics* (14.9%).

Table 2: Percentage of students by sex and field of study associated with students' major course[6] 2000

	Females	Males	All*
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	2.9	7.5	5.2
Architecture, building	0.9	8.6	4.8
Art, humanities and social sciences	8.6	4.9	6.7
Business, administration, economics	26.9	14.9	20.8
Education	3.0	2.1	2.5
Engineering, Surveying	2.8	20.0	11.5
Health, community services	11.1	4.8	7.9
Law, legal studies	0.6	0.6	0.6
Science	7.0	6.8	6.9
Veterinary science, animal care	0.4	0.1	0.2
Services, hospitality, transportation	16.6	16.6	16.6
VET multi-field education	12.6	10.0	11.3
Subject only - no course	6.8	3.1	5.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**857.9**	**884.9**	**1,749.4**

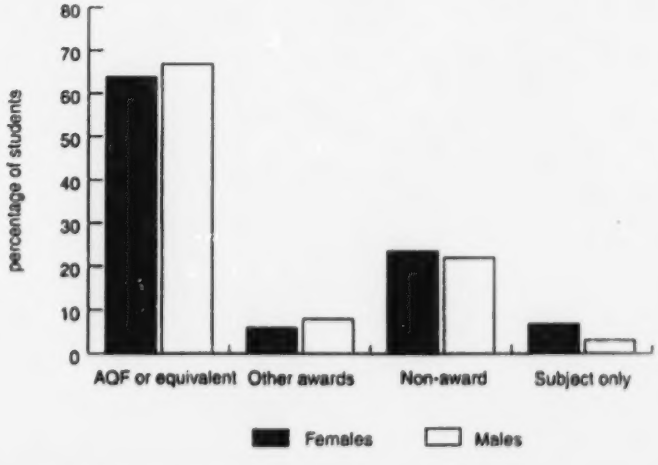
*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

Qualifications

Female students undertake vocational courses that lead to a wide range of qualifications.

- Women are slightly less likely than men to undertake a course of study that leads to a recognised qualification within the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or equivalent. In 2000, AQF courses accounted for almost two thirds (63.8%) of female students and 66.9% of male students (figure 6).
- Women are slightly less likely than men to enrol in courses that lead to other awards (e.g., statement of attainment). In 2000, these courses attracted 5.9% of all female students and 7.9% of male students.
- Women are sligthly more likely than men to enrol in non-award courses and in individual subjects not associated with any course. In 2000, non-award courses accounted for 23.5% of female students and 22.0% of male students, while individual subjects accounted for 6.8% of female and 3.1% of male students.

Figure 6: Percentage of VET students by major qualification, 2000[7]



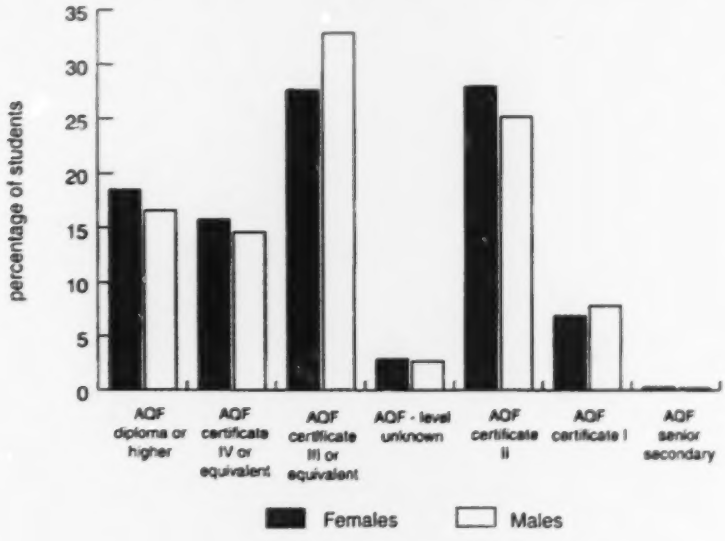
[6] In this table, each student who may be enrolled in more than one field of study is counted only once, against his/her *major* course (i.e. the course that leads to the highest qualification). In those cases where different courses undertaken by one student lead to the same qualification, the course which accounts for the largest number of hours is considered the *major* course.

[7] In figures 6 and 7, each student who is enrolled in more than one course (and, consequently, in more than one qualification) is counted only once, against his/her *major* (highest) qualification. If a student was enrolled in two different courses that lead to the qualifications of the same level, he/she is also counted only once, against the course which accounts for more hours.

Females, as well as males, undertake VET courses across the whole spectrum of AQF levels. Women outnumber men at all AQF levels, except for AQF certificates I and III[8]. In 2000, of all female students who undertook an AQF qualification:

- The largest proportion (28.0%) was enrolled at the AQF certificate II (figure 7).
- A further 27.7% pursued an AQF III or equivalent qualification and 18.5% were enrolled in the AQF diploma or above.

Figure 7: Percentage of students by sex and major AQF qualification, 2000



Subjects

Areas of learning

In 2000, the total number of enrolments in different subjects by female students amounted to 5.9 million, or 48.0% of all subject enrolments. Female students' training activity concentrated in a few subject areas. More than two thirds (67.8%) of all subject enrolments were in the following four areas of learning:

- *Administration, business, economics, law*, which accounted for 25.3% of all subject enrolments by females (table 3)
- *Mathematics and computing*, with 14.6% of enrolments
- *Social, educational and employment skills*, with 14.5% of enrolments, and
- *Health sciences* (13.4%).

Male choices of subjects were more evenly distributed across different areas of learning. The four most popular areas of learning among male students accounted for 60.4% of subject enrolments. It should be noted that three of these four subject areas were the same as for female students and included:

- *Administration, business, economics, law*, with 15.4% of enrolments (table 3),
- *Mathematics and computing*, with 15.2% of enrolments, and
- *Social, educational and employment skills*, with 11.2% of enrolments.

However, the subjects that accounted for the highest proportion of male enrolments (18.6%) were from *engineering and processing* learning area.

[8] AQF III has more males than females partly because the VET sector comprises apprenticeships and traineeships which are dominated by males (approximately 70%), most of whom undertake an AQF III or an equivalent qualification.

Table 3: Percentage of subject enrolments by sex and area of learning , 2000

	Females	Males	All*
Humanities	6.2	4.7	5.4
Social Studies	1.6	0.5	1.0
Education	2.1	1.7	1.9
Sciences	1.9	2.6	2.3
Mathematics, computing	14.6	15.2	14.9
Visual/Performing arts	3.3	2.2	2.7
Engineering, processing	2.1	18.6	10.6
Health sciences	13.4	7.6	10.4
Admin, business, economics, law	25.3	15.4	20.2
Built environment	0.8	7.8	4.4
Agriculture, renewable resources	2.5	4.8	3.7
Hospitality, tourism & personal services	11.6	7.7	9.6
Social, educational & employment skills	14.5	11.2	12.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**5,898.6**	**6,359.1**	**12,292.7**

*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

Success in subject completion

VET training activity undertaken by women is characterised by a high success rate. Also, females are generally more likely than males to pass the subjects they undertake. In 2000, of all assessed subject enrolments reported for females:

- almost nine in ten (88.0%) resulted in a successful outcome, slightly higher than for males (85.2%).
- 84.9% resulted in a pass, compared to 81.7% for males (table 4).

Table 4: Percentage of assessed subject enrolments by sex and subject outcome, 2000

	Females	Males	All*
Successful	88.0	85.2	86.5
Passed	*84.9*	*81.7*	*83.2*
RPL	*3.2*	*3.5*	*3.3*
Unsuccessful (failed)	12.0	14.8	13.5
Total assessed	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total assessed ('000)	**4,278.9**	**4,780.2**	**9,083.6**

*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

VET outcomes

The data on VET outcomes provided in this section are taken from the *Student Outcome Survey 2000* which presents information obtained through the national survey of graduates and module completers[10] who undertook VET during 1999 at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute in Australia. This section of the *Women in VET 2000: at a Glance* presents highlights of the 2000 survey specifically related to the employment outcomes of TAFE graduates as reflected in the labour force status, occupations and industry types.

[9] *Student Outcomes Survey 2000: National report* (NCVER 2000).

[10] *Graduates* are the students who completed their course in 1999 and received a qualification. *Module completers* are students who successfully completed part of their training (one more modules) and had left the TAFE system at the time of the survey.

Employment outcomes

Although women participate in VET on an equitable basis with men, they still have not achieved fully equitable employment outcomes on completion of their vocational training. According to the 2000 student outcomes survey:

- Vocational training clearly improved women's employment status, as the proportion of employed women after training was 7.4 percentage points higher than before training. However, for men, the proportion of employed graduates rose even higher, by 8.5 percentage points (table 5).
- After completing their vocational training, women were much more likely than men to have part-time work (32.1% compared to 13.3%).
- The proportion of unemployed women after training was 1.9 percentage points lower than before training. In comparison, the decrease in the proportion of unemployed men after completion of their training was greater (by 4.3 percentage points).
- The proportion of women not looking for any employment (ie., not in the labour force) was 5.6 percentage points lower after training than before training. However, it remained significantly higher for women than for men (15.2% compared to 8.7%).

Table 5: Percentage of male and female TAFE graduates by employment status before and after training as at May 2000

Employment status	Females		Males		All	
	Before course	After course	Before course	After course	Before course	After course
Employed*	64.3	71.7	72.4	80.9	68.1	76.0
Full-time	29.3	37.2	51.1	65.2	39.5	50.4
Part-time	33.2	32.1	19.0	13.3	26.6	23.3
Unemployed	14.2	12.3	14.1	9.8	14.1	11.2
Seeking full-time work	8.2	6.3	10.6	6.5	9.4	6.4
Seeking part-time work	6.0	6.0	3.4	3.3	4.8	4.7
Not in the labour force	20.8	15.2	12.9	8.7	17.1	12.1
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

*Note: includes 'not stated'.

Occupational outcomes

On completion of their training, VET students find employment in a variety of occupations. The 2000 survey of TAFE graduates identified several occupational categories that were most common for women. The survey also revealed that some occupations were still seen as either typically 'male' or 'female', which reflects a certain gender bias in occupational outcomes. For example:

- Almost 60% of all female TAFE graduates, compared to only 18.0% of males, were employed in *clerical, sales and service workers* occupational categories of different levels (table 6). Most of the women employed in this occupational category work as *personal care and nursing assistants, general clerks, children's care workers* and *receptionists*.
- Jobs that attract the highest percentage of male graduates are from *tradespersons and related workers* occupational category which alone accounted for around 40% of all male graduates, compared to only 6.7% of female graduates. Men employed in these occupations usually work as *motor mechanics, carpentry and joinery tradespersons, electricians, metal fitters and machinists*.
- Occupations that reflected a relative gender equity are from such categories as *managers and administrators, professionals* and *associate professionals*.

Table 6: Percentage of female and male TAFE graduates by occupational group as at May 2000

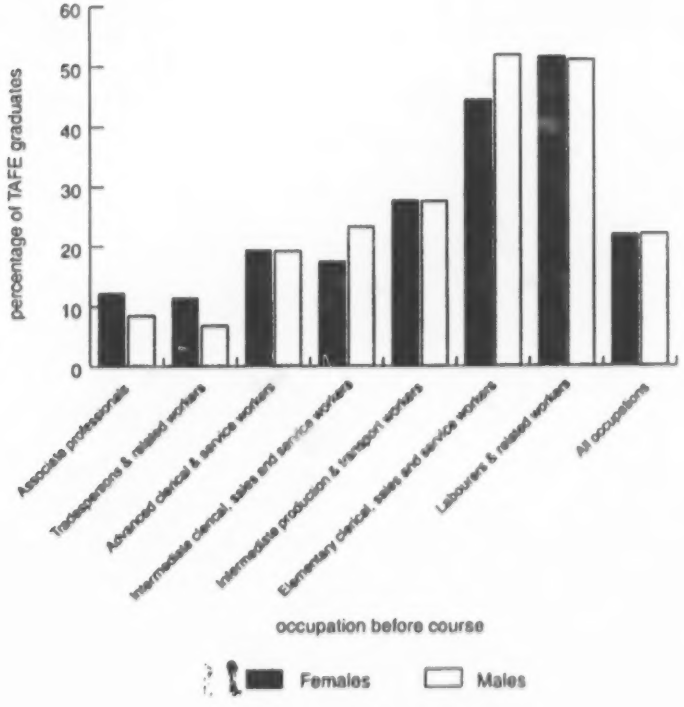
Occupational category	Females	Males	All*
Managers & administrators	4.1	4.8	4.5
Professionals	14.7	10.9	12.8
Associate professionals	8.6	10.5	9.5
Tradespersons & related workers	6.7	38.2	22.3
Advanced clerical & service workers	7.2	1.4	4.3
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	39.0	9.3	24.2
Intermediate production & transport workers	1.3	7.6	4.5
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	13.7	7.3	10.5
Labourers & related workers	4.7	10.0	7.3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

The survey also indicated a significant occupational shift for women as a result of vocational training. On completion of their course, about 22% of females moved to a higher occupational category, about the same percentage as males (figure 8).

- Women employed as *associate professionals* before their course were more likely than men employed in the same capacity to move to a higher level on completion of their course. Of all women employed in this capacity, 12.1% moved upwards as a result of their training, compared to only 8.4% for men.
- The most significant occupational shift occurred for women who before their training were employed in such occupations as *elementary clerical, sales and service workers* and *labourers and related workers.* Almost half of these women moved to a higher occupational category on completion of their training.

Figure 8: Percentage of female and male TAFE graduates who moved to a higher occupational category on completion of their course by the occupation before the course, May 2000



Industry type

According to the 2000 survey of TAFE graduates, certain gender imbalances can be observed in the distribution of male and female graduates between different types of industries. In 2000:

- Male graduates significantly outnumbered female graduates in such industries as *mining*, where men constituted 88.0% of all graduates employed in these industries, *manufacturing* (75.0%), *electricity, gas and water supply* (73.7%) and *construction* (90.3%).
- Females made up the majority of graduates employed in such industries as *health and community services* (87.5%), *education* (70.1%) and *finance and insurance* (70.1%).

In 2000, over half of all female TAFE graduates were employed in the following three industries:

- *Health and community services*, with 27.7% of all female graduates (table 7),
- *Retail trade* (14.6%), and
- *Property and business services*, which employed 10.8% of all female graduates.

Most of the male graduates, who were more evenly dispersed across industries, would be employed in:

- *Manufacturing* industry (17.8% of all male graduates) and
- *Construction* and *retail trade* industries (both 15.6%).

Table 7: Percentage of female and male TAFE graduates by the industry type of their employment as at May 2000

Industry type	Females	Males	All*
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.9	4.2	3.0
Mining	0.4	2.7	1.5
Manufacturing	5.8	17.8	11.7
Electricity, gas & water supply	0.4	1.3	0.8
Construction	1.6	15.6	8.6
Wholesale trade	1.4	1.8	1.6
Retail trade	14.6	15.6	15.1
Accomm., cafes & restaurants	8.2	6.0	7.1
Transport & storage	2.3	4.6	3.4
Communication services	1.1	1.6	1.3
Finance & insurance	3.3	1.4	2.4
Property & business services	10.8	8.9	9.8
Government admin. & defence	3.2	3.8	3.5
Education	9.3	4.0	6.7
Health & community services	27.7	4.0	16.0
Cultural & recreational services	2.8	2.7	2.8
Personal & other services	5.2	4.1	4.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

*Note: includes sex 'unknown'.

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